

THE
LADY OF THE MANOR.
A
C O M I C O P E R A.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

2 H T

LADY OF THE MANOR



CO 290 22 A

THE CROWN LIBRARY SIXTEEN

THE
LADY OF THE MANOR,
A
C O M I C O P E R A:

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL
IN
COVENT-GARDEN.

WRITTEN BY DR. KENRICK.

THE SONGS SET TO MUSIC BY MR. HOOK.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR E. AND G. BILLY IN THE POULTRY;
J. WILKIE, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; T. DA-
VIES, IN GREAT RUSSELL-STREET, COVENT-
GARDEN, AND J. WALTER, CHARIN-
CROSS. MDCCLXXVIII.



СИБИРСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
АСТРАХАНСКОГО ГИДРОГЕОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО
И ГЕОФИЗИЧЕСКОГО ТЕХНИЧЕСКОГО
УНИВЕРСИТЕТА

P R E F A C E.

THE outline of the following Opera (written about ten years ago, by way of relaxation from severer studies) was taken from the *Country Lasses* of Mr. *Charles Johnson*, particularly the pleasing and romantic episode, borrowed from the *Custom of the Country of Beaumont and Fletcher*.

The author, in accommodating his plan to the present taste, was led, of course, to reject the revolting absurdity of supposing the custom in question still to subsist.

The

P R E F A C E.

The considerable alterations and additions, also, which he found it expedient to make, both in the plot and dialogue, have so much diversified the whole, that it has been as *truly* as *ill-naturedly* observed, “ the piece resembles a coat, “ stolen a second time from a thief, “ so metamorphosed, that the very tailor, who first cut it out, would not “ know the handy-work of his own “ shears.”

It is no wonder that, in this age of *originality*, so many *truly-original* critics, who never play at *rob-thief* themselves, should sufficiently rally him on so artful and complete a transformation. He cannot help thinking, however, that these *very honest* gentlemen are a little unreasonable in expecting him to do such *great things* merely for his *amusement*, as are done by those who make play-writing their serious *occupation*.

If,

P R E F A C E.

If, therefore, this opera hath hitherto met with an approbation * as general as even the best of their most elaborate productions; the author cannot but impute it to the excellent acting of the theatrical performers, and the elegant taste of the musical composer.

* If it afford any consolation to the professional dramatists, who envy him this approbation, they may rest satisfied, he is by no means disposed even to amuse himself any more the same way.

T H E

A H. 2. 9

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Intestino apels om Mois E. N.	Brooks si H. 2. 9
vedi	vedi
young Wildman, on	Mr. QUICK.
Young Wildman, his Nephew,	Mr. VERNON.
Sir John Manly, wonder-	Mr. MATTOCKS,
Farmer Sternold,	Mr. WILSON.
Clodden,	Mr. DOYLE.

W O M E N,

Lady Lucy, otherwise Flora,	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Mrs. Townly, otherwise Laura,	MISS BROWN.
Cicely the Dairy Maid,	Mrs. FARREL.

ROMANTIC POETRY

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

A C T I.

SCENE a fertile Country. *A Gentleman's Seat at the top of a Hill, and a Farm-house in the Center of the Scene, at the Bottom.*

The Scene rises, and discovers Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly, dressed, like Country Lasses, accompanied by Sheep-shearers, Men and Maidens, dancing and singing in Chorus.

HAPPY Britons ! while we shear
Our silver fleeces once a year,
As rich, tho' not so rare,
If that of old
A fleece of gold,
We neither know nor care.

Mrs. Town. Stop, stop, my dear cousin Flora, stop.
I am quite weary, and can hoyden it no longer.

Lady Lucy. Come, rest a while on this bank, then ;
mean time, our good neighbour Clodden, here, will
give us the new sheep-shearing ballad again.

Clodden. That I will, fair damsel, and as often as you
desire it, so my lungs hold good, and the lads and lasses
will join in the chorus.

Lady Lucy. Strike up then.

B

Clod-

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

CLODDEN.

A wond'rous tale, my friends, we're told,
How, from some *foreign* shore,
To *Greece* of old,
A fleece of gold,
Advent'rous *Jason* bore.

Yet murmur not, my honest swains,
Your *native* flocks to keep;
Not less our gains,
Whose peaceful plains
Are silver'd o'er with sheep.

More richly doth our pains requite
The harvest of the fold,
Whose fleeces white
Are chang'd at sight,
By *commerce* into gold.

CHORUS repeated. Happy Britons, &c.

[*Exeunt Sheep-shearers, singing and dancing.*

Lady Lucy. So, you are heartily tired of your frolick, I see---

Mrs. Town. Indeed I am, my dear.

[*They come forward.*

Lady Lucy. And was this fatiguing amusement all the pleasure you promised yourself from this wild project, of our leaving the manor-house, and passing, in this disguise, under the names of Flora and Laura, for relations of farmer Sternold? I hope you do not intend to romp about with these good folks again to-morrow.

Mrs. Town. No, child, I was only willing to have another taste of your rural diversions before I left the country. And I promise you, I am fully satisfied of

their

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

3

their rusticity. I wish I could prevail on you to accompany me to London.

Lady Lucy. What to do there ?

Mrs. Town. To see and converse with human creatures, my dear; for I cannot look upon the things, that have just parted from us, in any other light than as a kind of intermediate beings between men and brutes; they are certainly of an inferior nature to people who live in London.

Lady Lucy. And yet, in the metropolis every thing is false, frivolous and artificial; while *here* all things appear in the plain and unaffected dress of nature.

LADY LUCY.

*Simplicity, daughter of Truth,
In Modesty's vesture array'd,
Here breathes the fond hope of the youth,
And whispers the wish of the maid.*

*There, Artifice, son of Deceit,
In impudent foppery dress'd,
With Innocence playing the cheat,
Still makes of true passion a jest.*

Mrs. Town. And yet, my dear Lucy, people, bred in society, are as preferable to these clowns as angels are to mere mortals.---How long do you think to live in this wilderness, before you get a husband, as I did, by accident ?

Lady Lucy. I should hope never; were I so soon to lose him again as you did, by accident.

Mrs. Town. Why not, my dear, if, like mine, he were as well lost as found? The man dropped from the clouds, to please my papa; and, taking pet at the world, returned back again---to please me.

4 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Lady Lucy. They say, indeed, that marriages are made in heaven.

Mrs. Town. Yes ; but they say too, they are strangely broke in coming down.

Lady Lucy. In London, perhaps, where the multiplicity of objects puzzles the choice. But, out of the few that drop here in the country, we may soon resolve to catch one ; and be assured, my dear Townly, that when the right man comes, I shall not let him slip through my fingers.

Mrs. Townly. Nay, there's not much choice in the whole sex. A man's but a man, make the most of him. Mine, they say, was one of the best of them, and you see I survived his loss.

Lady Lucy. You are too young and giddy, to take any thing to heart.

Mrs. Town. True, cousin, I wore the willow only with my weeds, and that not a weeping willow neither.

Lady Lucy. You are a wild rake, Townly.

Mrs. Town. We widows have a privilege, child--- But women are all rakes at heart ; so, at least the poet says : nay, I'll answer for it, that with all your simplicity, you have your female rakes in the country, as well as we in town.

MRS. TOWNLY.

Delightful is a rural life,
Where peace and plenty reign ;
Where faithful every man and wife,
And true each nymph and swain.

The plain of plains, the *rural plain*,
Where such pure raptures flow :
But may I ne'er see town again,
If such a plain I know.

Believe

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

5

Believe me, false the country clown

As any London beau ;

The *rustic lass*, like *Miss in town*,

Can favours too bestow.

The town of towns, dear *London town*,

Thy pleasures, then, be mine !

Deceit may dress in linen gown,

And *Truth* in diamonds shine.

Mrs. Town. To be serious, my dear Lady Lucy, I cannot conceive how any woman, who has youth, beauty, and fortune at command, as you have, can take delight in wandering, like a wild thing, about the woods, in gloomy groves and dismal shades ; when she might display her charms to so much greater advantage in the glittering circle of the Pantheon, or the brilliant vistas of Vauxhall.

Lady Lucy. And I can as little conceive how any woman, of sense or taste, can be taken with the artificial amusements of the town, when she might enjoy the pleasure of breathing the fresh air, and contemplating the beauties of nature, in the country.

Mrs. Townly. And you do really prefer the pitiful employment of dangling after a flock of simple sheep, to the superlative delight of having a flock of simple admirers dangling after you !---As I live, here they are !

Lady Lucy. Who ? What ?

Mrs. Town. Men, men, my dear, social beings !--- See, they are coming over the stile ! My heart flutters at the sight of them ; does not yours ?

Lady Lucy. Strangers, and well dressed !

Mrs. Town. Two of our London beaus : Sir John Manly and young Wildman.

Lady Lucy. My cousin Wildman !

Mrs.

6 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Mrs. Town. The same, my dear. You don't know much of him, it seems.

Lady Lucy. My uncle has ever kept him at such a distance, that I have not seen him since he was a schoolboy : nor do I believe Sir Wilful himself would know his nephew, any more than I. He has not suffered the young spark to come into his presence, since his return from his travels.

Mrs. Town. What can have brought them hither ? Let us retire behind this thicket ; perhaps we may learn their errand.

[They retire behind a thicket.]

Enter Sir John Manly and Young Wildman.

Manly. *[Speaking to his Servants without.]* Well, get the carriage round to the farm-house, yonder in the bottom. We'll walk across the fields, and meet you. *[To Wild.]* What an unlucky accident ! We are not, it seems, above a mile or two from the manor-house.

Wild. It will be impossible, however, to get our damage repaired time enough to reach it to-night. But no matter, the news of our disaster will get there before us, and, my word for it, when the good Baronet, my uncle, comes to be informed that the coach of a man of fashion hath broken down, in crossing the country to pay him a visit, he'll give us an opportunity of profiting by our misfortune.

Manly. Be it so then : I am ever for making a virtue of necessity. In the mean time, George, you will have the pleasure of spending the night with your dearly beloved mistress, *Variety* : you shall sleep, for once, on a truss of clean straw, in a farmer's barn.

Wild. Well, any thing for a change in life. I am satisfied, so we tread not continually the same track of insipid pleasures as in London, where our amusements,

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

7

Like the company at Ranelagh, move round and round
for ever in a circle.

WILDMAN.

The *dog* in a wheel, and the *horse* in a mill,
The *squirrel* with bells on his cage,
Thus run the same round of *mere drudgery* still,
So *dull* is the taste of the age !

Manly. Truce with your common-place taillery. Variety, indeed, is the pleasure of life, but not the comfort of it. I'll hold you a wager, you'll not sleep so soundly in a barn, as you would at a bagnio.

Wild. Not the first night, perhaps ; but custom would inure me to it.

Manly. Right---Habit only makes things easy and familiar. This removes every inconvenience, and makes us look even on danger and distress with indifference.

MANLY.

Luxurious lords, on beds of down,
Thus Care wide-waking keeps ;
While, laid on straw, the labouring clown
All night profoundly sleeps.

Nay, blythe, the sea-boy reefs the sail,
While howling tempests blow,
And laughs to scorn, amidst the gale,
His wat'ry grave below.

Wild. This is pretty moralizing, Manly. But, come, now we are so near our journey's end, let us rightly understand each other.

Manly. By all means.

Wild. You agree, then, that if, in consequence of this visit to my whimsical uncle, you should approve of his niece, get into her good graces, and marry her, you

you will advance me a moiety of that lady's portion, to be repaid on the death of Sir Wilful, should he die intestate ; and, in case of a will, partial either to nephew or niece, that we share his fortune equally between us.

Manly. Exactly.

Wildman. On the other hand, if you should dislike, or decline to pay your addresses to the lady---

Manly. Never fear, George : as I have determined to take up and look out for a wife, she will be certainly my choice. I was struck when I had a sight of her once, at Litchfield races, and have heard such encomiums on her wit, beauty and understanding, since, that I am half in love with her already : so let us get what accommodation we can to-night, and to-morrow proceed to business.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly, from behind the thicket.

Lady Lucy. So, so, these are your people bred in society ; these are your mortal angels !

Mrs. Town. Well, really, they are pretty fellows.

Lady Lucy. Yes, and prettily have they taken upon them to dispose of this proper person of mine, without once asking leave of the right owner.

Mrs. Townly. Nay, child, there's nothing in that. People must have some way of coming together : and if your cousin helps you to a good husband, I think you are greatly obliged to him.

Lady Lucy. And I am greatly obliged to him, for helping himself to half my fortune too, am I ?

Mrs. Town. That, indeed, is a piece of impertinence.

Lady Lucy. For which, if I don't make them do such penance---But, hold ; they return this way.

Mrs.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

9

Mrs. Town. Surely they won't know me in this disguise, I wish I had a mask.

Lady Lucy. A mask! that would be a strange sight, indeed in the country. No, no, only act up to your dress and character! You made so different an appearance in London, they will never recollect your features.

LADY LUCY.

Fine ladies with fair-painted faces in town,
One mask with another may hide;
Tho' less would be known *some* complexions, so brows,
. If laid both the vizors aside.

But, dowdy-like dress'd and bedizen'd, your part
In awkward simplicity lies,
The *woman-of-fashion*'s a creature of *art*,
And *nature* her surest *disguise*.

Mrs. Town. Enough! My hands are set, my eyes fixed; I have a blush at command. I'll bite the fingers of my cotton gloves, and be as very a hoyden as ever hopped round a may-pole.

Re-enter Sir John Manly and Wildman.

Manly. Well met, pretty maidens.---They're devilish handsome.

Wild. Fine girls, faith!---Can you tell us, fair damsel, [Addressing himself to Mrs. Townly.] where two honest fellows can get a lodging to-night. We have had the misfortune to---

Mrs. Town. Fortune! Sir, we don't tell fortunes, indeed. [Affecting great awkwardness in speech and manner.]

Lady Lucy. No, gentlemen, if you are fortune-hunters, you will find some of the sisterhood behind those elms. We are no gypsies.

C

Manly.

10 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Manly. Gypsies, my dear ! I protest I am astonished to see so much beauty and elegance. Your habits are rustic, but they are perfectly genteel ; and by your air and mien, you should be fine ladies from St. James's.

Mrs. Town. [very awkwardly.] Yes, we have quite the St. James's air, indeed.

Wild. Thou hast something better, my little dear. Those pretty pouting lips, those sparkling eyes, this yielding hand--- [Laying hold of her hand.]

Mrs. Town. Nay, pray, Sir, be civil---Come, cousin.

Wild. You would not, sure, leave us in a strange place, child.

Mrs. Town. Laud, Sir, we have nothing to do with you. As a couple of strays, indeed, we might drive you to the head-borough.

Wild. And what then ?

Mrs. Town. Why, then he would lodge you to-night in the pound ; have you cried the three next market-days ; and then, if nobody owned you---you would fall to the lady of the manor.

Wild. The lady of the manor !

Mrs. Town. Yes, Sir, for want of a lord---May neither of you have worse luck,---come, cousin.

Lady Lucy. [Coming forward with Man.] Ay, come let us go. [To Manly.] Pray, Sir, let go my hand.

Manly. Yes, child, if you'll let go my heart, otherwise, my dear, I shall not let you escape. Do you know the penalty of robbing a man thus, on the highway ?

Lady Lucy. If you have lost any thing, Sir, you know your remedy. It is as yet between sun and sun, you may sue the county.

Manly.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 11

Manly. No, child, I shall detain the robber and bring her to justice.

Lady Lucy. Indeed, Sir, you won't, for I shall instantly go home :

Manly. Where do you live, then ?

Lady Lucy. At yonder farm-house.

Manly. And who is the owner of it ?

Lady Lucy. One Sternold, a surly old farmer, who, when he's pleased, vouchsafes to call me daughter.

Wild. [To Mrs. Townly.] And do you live there too, my dear ?

Mrs. Townly. Yes, Sir, we live here two country cousins, fretting like silk and inkle, wove together in a piece.

Wild. How so ?

Mrs. Townly. Oh, Sir. She's quite a rustic, and has none of the town polish, one gets, by going, as I do, to market. [Curtseying with awkward affectation.]

Wild. [Aside.] Arch and silly ! A whimsical compound ! [Takes her aside.]

Manly. [To Lady Lucy.] And is your father, really, a farmer ?

Lady Lucy. A gentleman farmer, Sir ; one that having when young squandered away his estate in London, took an aversion to the town, and has been constantly railing against it ever since.

Manly. Is he so morose a cynic, think you, as to refuse us entertainment for a single night ?

Lady Lucy. Indeed I believe he is.

Manly. Surely not, if you intercede in our favour.

Lady Lucy. Perhaps not ; but I am not satisfied of the propriety of that ; I will however propose it to my father, and if he approves of it, you will be welcome. Come, cousin. [Exit *Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly*.]

Man. What a pair of pretty rustics !

Wild. I never saw any thing more charming.

12 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Manly. My girl is the most angelic creature.

Wild. Mine the most mortal-killing beauty.

Manly. Mine the prettiest, wittiest —

Wild. Mine the neatest, sweetest — a little silly or so ! But, no matter, the more simple the more kind.

WILDMAN.

Give me the girl that's ripe for joy,

Who, not so wise as to be coy,

Is amorous, void of art.

MANLY.

Give me the lovely girl, who knows,

To prize the blessings, she bestows ;

Whose head informs her heart.

WILDMAN.

Be thine, then, the joy wit and sense may inspire,

And mine the fond raptures that flow from desire.

MANLY.

Though mine be the joy wit and sense may inspire,

Be mine too the raptures that flow from desire.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E. *A Farm-Yard.*

Enter Sternold.

Sternold. I wish these young ladies were returned. It grows late, and should any accident happen to them, they might pay dear for their frolick — Ha ! they have been talking to two young sparks, I see : there's something more in the wind, than I suspected.

Enter Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly.

Lady Lucy. Oh, farmer Sternold ! We have a favour, to beg of you. Can't you furnish lodgings for those two gentlemen yonder ?

Stern. Why, ladies, if you will not let me into your whole

whole project, I may commit some blunder. You know how apt I am to be rude to strangers.

Lady Lucy. Well, well, you must treat them as such, notwithstanding — for tho' we know them, they don't know us : but take us for what we seem. Oblige us, in giving them entertainment to-night and behave to them otherwise as you will. They are within hearing, so appear to them in character.

Stern. [Aside.] Then I have my cue. [Aloud.] Ay, some Covent-Garden gentry, I suppose ; that, having been fleeced at the bagnio and card-table, are come to recruit their finances on the highway. But here they can only rob the hen-roost. What a plague sent them hither ?

Lady Lucy. Bless us, Sir, how you talk ! The gentlemen will hear you.

Stern. Hear me ! Why, I would have them hear me. Where are they ?

Lady Lucy. By yonder hedge-row, Sir — they have been waiting a good while.

Stern. Let them wait, with a murrain.

Lady Lucy. You will please, Sir, to say yes or no.

Stern. No, then, no ! Burn my house and barns ; let the distemper seize my cows, the rot my sheep, the mildew my corn, and the blight my fruit ; but let no London plagues come within my doors. What has bewitch'd you to ask such a question !

Lady Lucy. They desired it of us, in common humanity.

Mrs. Townly. And 'twere a pity the poor gentlemen should lie all night in the fields.

Stern. Gentlemen ! — Why, ye simpletons, they are the bane and destruction of your sex ; worse enemies to beauty than old age or the small-pox — Gentle, indeed !

24 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

STERNOLD.

Not Satan, when a wily snake,
He tempted grandame *Eve*,
More subtle than the modern rake
Her daughters to deceive.

Like her, each curious female, still,
The fruit forbidden eyes,
And longs to taste both good and ill;
For *women* will be *wife*.

Like him, pursu'd the precious plan,
The devil himself had laid,
Doth cruel, cunning, gentle man
Seduce the silly maid.

Lady Lucy. But under your protection, Sir—
Stern. True daughters of the first woman! Well to
oblige you, I'll talk to them. Tell them they may
come this way.

Lady Lucy. We will, Sir.
Mrs. Townly. See, Sir, they are almost here, and
look like sober, honest gentlemen: not as if they come
from London! [Ex. *Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly*.
Stern. Now, to me, they look like a deputation from
the cuckold-makers of the corporation, in common-
hall assembled.

Enter Sir John Manly and Young Wildman.

Manly. We are extremely sorry, Sir—
Wild. To give you this trouble—
Manly. But, having lost our way—
Wild. And our carriage breaking down—
Stern. Extremely sorry! Yes, you look very sorrow-
ful, indeed. Lost your way!—Now I rather think you
are

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 25

are two sorry fellows that are never out of your way—
A pretty excuse this, you have trumped up for an unseasonable visit.

Manly. Sir, in a few plain words—

Stern. Come, come, I'll tell you, in a few plain words, what honourable design you are bent upon. You clubbed your shallow wits together; your carriage was to break down; you were to be benighted; and taking the advantage of my humanity for entrance into my house, you were honestly to embrace that opportunity of ruining my family. Was it not so? Ask your consciences now, ha!

Manly. Our consciences, Sir!

Stern. Our consciences, Sir! Yes, your consciences, Sir. What are you posed? Have you no consciences? Egad, like enough. Pray whence come you?

Manly. From London.

Stern. From London! I thought so: the mart of iniquity; the devil's chief residence. He picks up a vagabond sinner now and then with us in the country; but he monopolizes with you in London.

Wild. You are very severe upon the town, Sir.

Stern. Yes, Sir. I know both ends of it.

Wild. Which are both greatly changed of late we assure you.

WILDMAN.

When you were a youngster, 'tis known,
The *town* was as wicked as witty;
The laugh was at *court* all their own;
The old standing jest, still, the *city*.

But now, Sir, believe me, 'tis true,
Of both ends the practices tally;
A lord thus stock-jobs, like a jew,
And baits bulls and bears in the Alley.

In morals and manners the same,
 For money or love when the trade is,
 The peer plays the citizen's game,
 And the peeress the gay *city-lady's*.

Stern. Yes, yes, I hear London is mightily changed, indeed ; and if it were grown as much *better* as it is bigger, something might be said for it. But the *head* is too big for the body, and the whole nation has got the rickets.

Manly. I find, Sir, you are an universal satirist. But, come, to the purpose, I see our servants and horses are coming round. Is there no security you will take for a single night ?

Stern. There is ; but it lies in my own hands, gentlemen, and if you dare abide by honest conditions—

Manly. We wish no other, Sir. They who intend no wrong fear none.

Stern. There lies your way, then, gentlemen. Enter and welcome. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly.

Lady Lucy. He has taken them both in.

Mrs. Townly. As I live, so he has. Now, Lady Lucy, if the right man should be dropped from the clouds ; you will be as good as your word, and not let him slip through your fingers.

Lady Lucy. I protest my heart beats strangely.

Mrs. Townly. Yes, child, it beats to arms, the town's besieged and the guard is called upon duty.

Mrs. Townly.

The heart of a woman's the *fort*,
 Where quickly the *garrison* muster,
 And all her proud spirits resort,
 When man puts her into a *fluister*.

Yet

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

17

Yet, courage, my girl, never fear ;
Discretion's an able defender,
That, be the foe ever so near,
Will make proper terms of surrender.

But here returns your gallant, to look for us, I'll
leave you together.

Lady Lucy. Nay, but—— [Laying hold of her.

Enter Sir John Manly.

Manly. I am come, gentle maidens——

Mrs. Townly. Yes, Sir, we see you are. Good
b'ye, cousin. [Breaks from her and runs out.]

Manly. [Stopping Lady Lucy, who is following her.
Indeed, my pretty maid, I must not lose this opportunity of talking a little seriously to you.

Lady Lucy. Bless me, Sir. What can you have
seriously to say to me ?

Manly. Say, child ! Mere saying is too cold. Let
me swear to thee.

Lady Lucy. Well, Sir ; and what would you swear
to me ?

Manly. That I love you, passionately, fondly love
you.

Lady Lucy. That you love me ! Eh ! And pray,
Sir, how long may you have thus *passionately, fondly,*
lov'd me !

Manly. From the first moment I beheld you.

Lady Lucy. About half an hour, or so !

Manly. Yes, my eyes caught instantly the infection,
my head grew confus'd, my heart inflamed,
my——

Lady Lucy. Poor gentleman ! troubled with the
amorous epilepsy ! Is it usual for you to fall in love,
thus at first sight ! Or is this the first fit of the kind !

Manly. The first and last, be assured. The flame
which now glows in my breast will burn for ever.

D

Lady

18 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Lady Lucy. Not it, Sir. Be comforted. It was kindled too suddenly, and burns too violently, to last long.

LADY LUCY.

*Love, by reason uncontroll'd,
Never long the same can hold,
'Tis a fever of the mind,
Of the intermittent kind ;
Hot and cold,
Like an ague, hot and cold.*

*Now the wretch with fury burns,
Now his freezing fit returns ;
Fickle as the breath he draws,
Now he chills, and now he thaws.
Hot and cold !*

Love's an ague, hot and cold.

Manly. This, child, is mere poetry. And poets, you know, will say any thing.

Lady Lucy. Come then, Sir, to converse without a metaphor.

Manly. With all my heart. Then I declare, I think you a charming creature, and never saw a woman I liked so well in my life.

Lady Lucy. At the same time you, think yourself sufficiently agreeable, I suppose.

Manly. Why, don't you ?

Lady Lucy. To be sure, you are not absolutely frightful.

Manly. Nay, but you like me.

Lady Lucy. Don't be too confident of that. You may flatter yourself, as you do me.

Manly. Flattery, my dear, is the language of love. It is impossible to say what we mean, when our meaning is beyond the power of words.

Lady

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 19

Lady Lucy. 'Tis time then to have done, Sir, if you cannot speak to be understood.

Manly. Or if you won't understand me. To speak plainly then, in what part of this rural habitation is your bed-chamber ?

Lady Lucy. That's pretty plain, indeed.

Manly. Do you sleep alone, child.

Lady Lucy. No, Sir, with my cousin Laura. But why are you so inquisitive ? My father sleeps not far off.

Manly. No matter.

MANLY,

In the gentle *Laura's* stead,
Take me, fair one, to your bed ;
To your arms I'll softly creep,
When your *father's* fast asleep.
Tell me, charmer, which the way,
Lest I, in the dark, should stray.

Lady Lucy. So then, it seems, you really assure yourself that, having fighed, kissed my hand, said a few foolish fine things and impudently stared me in the face, I shall drop into your arms, as they say birds do into the mouth of the rattle-snake, by fascination.

Manly. Nay, my love, this is all raillery. Come, you shall live with me and command my fortune. I'll take you from this surly old man, and place you in your proper sphere. Make me but happy to night.

[*Warmly.*

[*Laying hold of her hand, which she coldly withdraws.*

Lady Lucy. And you will leave me miserable to-morrow. I thank you for the mighty favours you would confer. But what would the world say ?

20 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Manly. The world ! Child. I will set you above it. My whole estate, shall be devoted to your pleasure, and my influence exerted to protect you from insult.

Lady Lucy. No, Sir. Tho' you could place me beyond the reach of censure, you could not raise me above the sense of shame. You might protect me from the insult of reproach, but could not shield me from the pangs of remorse. I scorn your protection.

[*Going.*

Manly. [*Laying bold of her band.*] Nay, but stay.

LADY LUCY.

Such cruel protectors ye *men*,
Who seek simple maids to decoy,
As butchers, who guard in the pen
The lambs, they prefer to destroy.

MANLY.

Nay, *men* to fond *shepherds* compare,
Who watch o'er the hopes of the fold ;
The favourite lamb of whose care,
To slaughter is not to be sold.

LADY LUCY.

Adieu, mean seducer, adieu !
I fly from the falsehood of art.

MANLY.

In vain ; for I still will pursue
The charmer possessing my heart.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.]

A C T II.

The curtain rises, and discovers Sir John Manly, Young Wildman, Sternold, Lady Lucy, Mrs. Townly, and others sitting at a table.

Stern. Ay, a song ! But, let it be something, in which we may all bear a part.

Manly. And let the burthen be rural hospitality.

Song for several voices.

With friendly smile, and social glee,
Lo ! *Rural-hospitality*,
With hearty welcome to the best,
Of ev'ry Stranger makes a guest.

In plenty spreads her cheerful board,
With what kind Nature's gifts afford ;
So lib'ral, generous, frank and free
Is *Rural-hospitality* !

In heaven no sooner heard her name,
Than *Jove* to earth a rambler came ;
Philemon's guest, as well as we ;
Hail, *Rural-hospitality* !

[*They all rise. Lady Lucy, Mrs. Townly, and the rest, go out.*

Sir John Manly, Wildman and Sternold, come forward.

Stern. Ay, only lay aside your town manners, gentlemen ; and we shall agree well enough.

Manly. But what hath set you, farmer, so much against London ?

Stern.

Stern. The insolence and impertinence of its inhabitants.—Prodigal as I was, I could not bear to be fleeced by a set of money-making sharpers, who differed from coiners, clippers, and cut-purses only, in being greater criminals with greater security.—I could not endure the haughtiness of scoundrel upstarts ; who, by taking advantage of the weakness, or administering to the wickedness of mankind, were enabled to assume the appearance of gentlemen, and lolled at ease in the carriages, which honester men were forced to drive.

Manly. Yet thus will it ever be, Sir ; while men are men, and live in a state of society.

Stern. No Sir, it is because men are *not men*, that such pitiful doings disgrace society.—It is because so many mean animals are ever ready to bend the knee and crawl on *four legs* that a few others stand so erect and strut about so insolently on *two*. But I !—

STERNOLD.

I never could bear, in the train
Of sycophants servile, to wait ;
Or, meanly dependent, in vain
To dance at the heels of the great.

The spaniel, indeed, that will creep,
And kiss, while they beat him, their hand,
In time, on a wool-sack may leap,
And sit with the lords of the land.

But he that by merit would rise,
Will find, to his cost, when too late,
That meanness, not merit, they prize ;
So low and so little the great !

Manly. I hope, farmer, your sentiments have not infected your neighbourhood.—If they have, we are likely

likely to meet with but an indifferent reception, from the old gentleman there on the top of the hill, whom we purposed to visit.

Stern. Sir Wilful Wildman ! Oh ! no. He is still fond of your men in power and place, your people of rank and quality, forsooth.

Manly. I thought him a worthy character, Sir.

Stern. He is so. Sir Wilful has many more good qualities than the fops he so foolishly admires.—

Manly. He has a niece, I think, the toast of the country !

Stern. She is, Sir, and very deservedly ; but you'll hardly have an opportunity of seeing her, unless you make some stay in these parts : she is at present gone a visiting somewhere, with a rantipole young widow of quality, that came down from London about a month ago. And when they will return to the manor, it seems, nobody knows but themselves ; and perhaps they neither.

Manly. That's unlucky.

Stern. Yes, Sir, she would have been worth your seeing : she has twenty thousand pound in her pocket and will in all probability succeed to the whole estate of Sir Wilful.

Wild. Has the baronet no other relations, then ? I thought he had a nephew.

Stern. Yes, he has a nephew, and a sad rakehell young dog, they say, he is. Sir Wilful never sees him, and will most likely cut him off with a shilling. At least I would advise him to it.

Wild. [Aside.] I'm mnch obliged to you for that, however.

Stern. He has been sent abroad truly for improvement, and improved, it seems, he is returned.

Manly. In virtù, I suppose, eh !

Stern. Ay, if by virtù you mean all manner of vice. The devil, I think, possesses the fathers and guardians

of this age to send over their sons and wards to the continent. Luxury is a plant that thrives pretty well in the cold climate of our own island : there is no need of transplanting it into the hot-beds of France and Italy. But, come, gentlemen, walk into the other room. I'll just step out and see your servants and cattle provided for, and return immediately. I see the girls are coming again this way ; they will entertain you in the mean while.

[Exit.]

Lady Lucy, and Mrs. Townly, crossing the stage and curtseying as they pass.

Manly. [To *Lady Lucy.*] Whither away, my little charmer ? [Follows *Lady Lucy* out.]

Wild. [To *Mrs. Town.*] No, no, child, you don't get off so easily.

[Runs after *Mrs. Townly* and brings her back.]

Mrs. Town. [Affecting a silly awkwardness as in a former Scene.] Laud, Sir, what would you have ! You men are the strangest creatures.—

Wild. And, you, women, are the most provoking things ! Whither were you going ?

[Offers to kiss her, she breaks from him.]

Mrs. Town. I sha'nt tell you indeed and so don't — follow me. [Exit.]

Wild. That I will ; for if that be not a challenge I'll never accept one.— [Exit.]

Re-enter Sir John Manly, and Lady Lucy.

Lady Lucy. Nay, Sir : No more of this, I beseech you.—I have told you, my heart is not to be purchased.—

Manly. Not with mine, my dear ? Come we'll make an exchange. I'll give you heart for heart.—

Lady Lucy. That was indeed the whole way, they say.—Before money was in fashion, they used to barter in kind.—

Manly.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 25

Manly. Let us then revive that honest custom of the age of love and innocence.

Lady Lucy. But, have you a clear title to what you would dispose of ? Is not that heart of yours sold or mortgaged already ?

Manly. I was free as air till I beheld those eyes.

Lady Lucy. And would yet so soon exchange your freedom for servitude.

Manly. If I might be your servant.

Lady Lucy. I am afraid you'll prove a worthless one.

Manly. Try me, and if you like me not, discharge me.

Lady Lucy. That may be dangerous ; but come, instead of taking you for a servant, suppose I should like you well enough to make you *master*.—Would you marry me ?

Manly. Marry you ! Why, that is---as---to be sure---but,---

Lady Lucy. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Confounded as I live ! The man so very humble as to offer me *his* service, is too haughty to accept of *mine*.

Manly. Not that, child---Not at all---Oh, no ! But why need we marry ? Why should you give me the *command* who am so ready to *obey* ?

Lady Lucy. It is enough, Sir. I am fully satisfied of the baseness of your designs.---Take back the vain offer of your heart, and know that I scorn as much to yield to your dishonest passion as you do to submit to honourable love.

[Going.]

Manly. [Detaining her.] Nay, but stay.---You must stay.---Let me reflect a little.

Lady Lucy. Do, Sir. Think how ungrateful, how injurious your solicitations. You call yourself a gentleman, and pretend to be ruled by the laws of truth and honour ; and yet you would betray the confidence reposed in your veracity ; you would defraud your honest host of his greatest treasure, the innocence of his

daughter ; you would inhospitably murder my poor father ; the man whose house you entered under a solemn engagement, that would to common robbers, under the like circumstances, be sacred and inviolable.

Manly. Thou hast touched my soul. A conscious pang shoots through my heart and covers me with shame.

Lady Lucy. I know the disparity of our fortunes.---I know you fear your family and name should suffer in the opinion of the world ; but believe me, Sir, they suffer more in fact, when you attempt to seduce an honest mind from virtue.

Manly. I own it.---Can you forgive me ? Your just reproof hath overcome my scruples. I will marry thee.

Lady Lucy. Nay but think seriously. Can you love me for life ? A poor girl without a penny of portion. Take time to consider of it.

LADY LUCY.

Think what your companions so gay,
And family friends in high-life,
With insolent scoffing will say,
If made humble *Flora* your wife.

Though virtue, in simple attire,
May pleasing appear in the *clown*,
Great folks in the *country* admire
The merit, they spurn at, in *town*.

Manly. I have thought of it ; and would marry you, were it practicable, immediately. No family can censure, no education improve, such manners. I must not, cannot, will not, live without you. My whole soul is fixed, my wishes all center in you. Can you deny me ? Give me your hand. Let me be yours for ever. My

whole

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 27

whole estate shall go to purchase your consent, and that shall be your wedding portion.

Lady Lucy. Well, Sir, on that condition and with my father's consent you may possibly obtain mine.

Manly. I'll seek him and obtain his instantly. But shall I then be sure of yours?

Lady Lucy. Why that is---as---Bless me, here's somebody coming.

Manly. You promise then?

Lady Lucy. Promise! I don't know:---well---but then I do.

[*Manly leads Lady Lucy to the door and returns.*]

Manly. Charming creature! Marry you! How can I resist such wit, beauty and virtue united?---But the world---How shall I withstand the reproach of my acquaintance?---I will renounce them. I can more easily sustain the taunts of a thousand fops and flirts of fashion, than support a single reproof from my lovely, virtuous Flora.

MANLY.

Then give me, dear charmer, your hand,
The world's vain reproaches above,
My freedom I yield on demand;
The world were well lost for your love.

Re-enter Wildman.

Wild. Well said, heroic Anthony. But where's your Cleopatra, my boy?

Manly. A Cleopatra only in beauty, George. You come in good time: I want your advice. Shall I marry this charming little rustic or not?

Wild. Marry her, why you are not in love with her, surely?

Manly. Faith, I believe I am---I have strong symptoms of it. My heart flutters at the sight of her. She

is constantly in my thoughts. I could fight for her, die for her.

Wild. Poh ! that a man might do for an hundred women, he was never in love with. To die for a woman, *Manly*, is a mere piece of gallantry. But to marry her, boy, is to live for her, a serious piece of business, and perhaps with her too, which is---out of fashion, egad, and that is worse than being out of the world by half.

Manly. Yet that I could bear with Flora,---fame, fortune, friendship, all put into the balance against her, appear light as a feather. My regard for her will be lasting as life.

Wild. Then you must die soon, *Manly*, take my word for it. However, if you have a mind to put your passion to a violent death, you will take the readiest way. Marriage is as certain a remedy for love, as an incurable mortification is for all other disorders.

Manly. Don't be so severe, *George*. Her charms will afford an eternal source of pleasure.

Wild. I don't believe either in the immortality of her charms, or the eternity of your passion.

Manly. Look at her again, then, and be converted.

Wild. Convert thyself, my friend. To marry a woman merely for her beauty, is to enslave your whole body for the gratification only of your eyes. But why need you marry her ? Give her some gold, man, promise her more : cheapen her ; purchase her ; carry her off, as I will do the little lapwing, her cousin : What, the devil, should you encumber yourself with the lease of a house for, when you may rent the best apartments in it, as long as you like, and leave it at pleasure ?

Manly. I don't believe that. Had you seen with what modest reluctance she yielded even to a kiss ! Her maiden reserve—

Wild.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 29

Wild. Modest reluctance ! I like that truly ! Maiden reserve ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Little artful gypsey !

YOUNG WILDMAN.

The cunning *country wench*, in this,
Like little, lofty, *London Miss*,
So shyly shuns a civil kiss ;

But boldly offer more---
Begin to rifle once her charms,
Her bosom beats with soft alarms,
And, kindly sinking in your arms,
Her feign'd aversion's o'er.

Manly. And yet I have tried every temptation to allure, every argument to persuade ; and neither my gifts nor my promises would avail me.

Wild. Poh ! poh ! you did not come up to her price, I suppose. That's all. I thought, *Manly*, you had known women better. Besides, consider, you are on the cruise after my cousin *Lady Lucy*, a twenty thousand pounder ! Will you be diverted from the chace of such a noble prize, by such a little smuggling cutter as this ? If the free-hearted cock-boat will give herself away willingly, or take a reasonable price for her cargo, well and good. But to purchase a pretty beggar at the expence of your whole estate, reputation and liberty ! Zounds, man, are you mad ? Come, come, let us have no more of this, but go in and sit down to old *Crusty's October*.

Manly. It is in vain, I find, to talk of virtue to a libertine. Go in, yourself ; I'll join you presently. But, I must speak a word or two with old *Crusty*, as you call him, before we set into drinking.

[*Exeunt at opposite sides of the stage.*

SCENE

SCENE an Orchard with an Arbour at the bottom in front.

Mrs. Townly comes forward out of the Arbour.

Mrs. TOWNLY.

Sure nature form'd man for a rover,
Weak women design'd to deceive !
His tale, though told over and over
To twenty, they all would believe.

Nay, were time or chance to discover
The falsehood, so many must rue ;
So soothing the voice of a lover,
To each he would seem to be true.

Enter Lady Lucy.

Lady Lucy. Well, cousin ; what have you done with your gentleman ?

Mrs. Town. Nay, what have you done with yours ?

Lady Lucy. Mine is grown the most civil, obsequious flatterer.

Mrs. Town. Mine continues the most impudent, rude rogue. Do you know, that I could not get rid of him without promising to meet him here after supper. And yet he no sooner left me than he fell desperately in love with Cicely, the dairy-maid : and told the poor wench more lies, in five minutes, than she ever heard at statute, market or fair, in her whole life.

Lady Lucy. It would be a good deed to put the rake to some shame.

Mrs. Town. I intend it, if he be not shameless. I have therefore ordered Cicely to come hither and give him the meeting in my stead. I have also another scheme in my head, with the help of Farmer Sternhold, to punish his impudence more severely, if he carries it any further.

Enter

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 33

Enter Cicely.

Mrs. Town. So, Cicely, you have made a conquest of the London gentleman it seems.

Cicely. Concourse ! Madam ! Laud ! I don't know what your ladyship means.

Mrs. Town. Madam ! Ladyship ! You know, child, you are not to call me Madam, but Mistress Laura.

Cicely. True Madam Laura, I declare I did not know one word in ten the gentleman said. But he hugged and squeezed me so, I am sure I wished 'un further.

Lady Lucy. He did not hurt you, sure !

Cicely. Not to speak of : I could have managed 'un well enough, had that been all. But as he was a gentleman, I was minded to let 'un alone a little. Yet he was so woundy skittish, had it been Robin or Richard, I would have slapped the face of o'un heartily.

CICELY.

At romps with Robin, Tom, or Dick,
One fearful is of danger,
And rates them for the wanton trick
One pardons in a stranger.

If such rough clowns should come too near,
We risk the being undone :
But rude may be those freedoms *here*,
Which civil are in *London*.

Lady Lucy. And yet you must not let even Londoners be too familiar, Cicely ; for tho' less rough, they are not less rude, and are the more dangerous as they are more insinuating.

Cicely. Your Ladyship !

Lady *Lucy*. Again ! your Ladyship ! My name is Flora, you know.

Mrs. *Town*. Hush ! Hush ! Yonder goes our spark, sauntering about to look for me, I suppose. You have your instructions, Cicely, so put your best foot foremost. We shall be at hand to assist you, if your gentleman grows rude upon encouragement.

[*Exeunt Lady Lucy, and Mrs. Townly.*

Enter Cicely alone.

Cicely. I will, Madam, and as he is within ear-shot I'll at him first with a song.

CICELY.

What hopes can there be for poor *Cicely*,
That one who's a gentleman born,
In love will not cater more nicely,
And treat a plain milk-maid with scorn ?

Can he who was e'er sworn at *Highgate*,
The mistress forsake for the maid ;
When, ah ! between her mien and my gait,
So striking a diff'rence display'd ?

Can he, who knows a gem to prize,
And may its worth enjoy,
Reject, when both before his eyes,
A diamond for a toy ?

What hopes can there be, then, for *Cicely*, &c.

Enter Wildman.

Wild. What in full song, my little canary bird ! I have been looking here all about for you this half hour.

Cicely. For me or Mrs. *Laura*, Sir ?

Wild. *Laura* ! child. No for you. Did your young mistress talk of coming, then.

Cicely. Yes, Sir. She sent me to tell you she should not come.

Wild.

Wild. Ha ! ha ! ha ! I like that much. Who wanted her ? I had rather have your company, my dear *Cicely*, by half. Why, do you know that I fell in love with you---

Cicely. At first sight, mayhap.

Wild. Nay, before that, mayhap.

Cicely. What before you saw me at all, Sir ! What for, pray ?

Wild. For your singing, my little woodlark. As I listened to the ditties you carol'd, coming home from milking, Cupid let fly his darts so thick at me, that one came, *whiz*, into my right ear.

Cicely. And went, *whiz*, out of the left, I suppose.

Wild. No, faith, it lodged in my head, and in its way down to my heart, left, at my tongue's end, a little song, I once made on a name-sake of yours, pat to our present purpose.

WILD MAN.

Love, my blindfold heart to wound,
Made not *sightly* charms his choice ;
Bat, more artful, arm'd with *sound*,
Avail'd him of *Cecilia's* voice.

Echo thus made *Pan*, of yore,
Amorous of the *vocal* wind.
Sing, sweet *Cicely*, sing no more,
Till *Love* be *deaf* as well as *blind*.

Unless, my sweet *Cicely*, you sing only for me, and then you may warble sweet-jug all the live-long night, like a nightingale.

Cicely. And will you lie so long awake to listen to me ?

Wild. That I will, my little *Philomel*. Do you think I had not rather listen to you than gaze upon that moppet, your mistress, *Laura* ?

Cicely. Moppet, Sir ! Laud ! Mrs. Laura is reckoned a monstrous deal handsomer than me.

Wild. She ! Mere curds and whey ! No more to be compared to you than sour butter milk is to sweet cream, child. Besides, the silly creature is half a fool, an idiot in comparison of you.

Cicely. Silly ! Oh ! oh ! oh ! Why she goes in these parts for a great wit. You are certainly joking with me now.

CICELY.

You terribly flatter, I'm sorely afraid,
Poor *Cicely*, an ignorant, innocent maid ;
More witty and pretty by half than myself,
My betters, so fair,
You well may compare
To fine china ware,
That stands in the cupboard or uppermost shelf ;
While homelier *Ciss*,
Like a plain earthen dish,
Is coarse and as clumsy as delf.

Wild. Wrong not your charms, my pretty little milk-skimmer. I sweat you look, in that straw hat and short petticoat, like a queen of the fairies, come to take a dance on the green by moonlight.

WILD MAN.

Let me then to yonder bower,
Only but for half an hour,
With my fairy-queen retire.
There unseen we'll toy and kiss—
Why averse, my gentle *Ciss*?—
Zounds ! she sets me all on fire.

[Wildman endeavours to force Cicely towards the arbour, out of which Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly burst, laughing.

Lady

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 35

Lady Lucy and Mrs. Town. Ha! ha! ha! [They advance, laughing, to the front of the stage, keeping Wildman and Cicely shuffling and looking confus'd, still between them.]

Lady Lucy. [Ironically to Cicely.]

Gentle fairy
Of the dairy,
Who by moonlight trip the green!

Mrs. Townly.

With your lover,
Under cover,
Go and toy and kiss unseen.

Cicely. [Pretending to be frightened.] Indeed and indeed Mrs. Flora; indeed and indeed, Mrs. Laura, I was not consenting nor relenting. The wicked gentleman would force me into the arbour, in spite of my teeth.

Lady Lucy. [Affecting anger.] Mighty well, hussley! Be ready to confront him then before your master to-morrow mornin'.

Mrs. Townly. For neither of you shall sleep in the house to-night, I can assure you.

Lady Lucy. A pretty gentleman, indeed! Prefer the maid to the mistress!

Mrs. Townly. A mighty pretty gentleman, truly! Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exeunt Lady Lucy and Mrs. Townly, laughing.*]

Wild. What an unlucky dog am I! By beginning with the maid before I had done with the mistress, I shall do nothing, I suppose, with either mistress or maid.

CICELY. [Affecting to cry.]

Alack! must poor Ciss,
For a trifle like this,
Be turn'd out to the wind and the weather?

Oh! ho! ho! ho! ho! [Crying.]

WILDMAN.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! [Laughing.
No, no, Cicely, no,
With me you shall go,
And we'll lodge in some hovel together.

Come, don't look so *renetty*, my cream-cheese curd,
If you lose your place on my account, I'll get you another.
You shall live with me, and churn butter in
a dairy of your own. But surely your young mistresses
will not be so cruel as to lock us out of doors!

Cicely. I don't know, Sir. They are very severe.
I'll go and see, if you please.

Wild. And so make a separate peace and leave me out
of the treaty! No, no, child. If I am to stay all night
in the orchard, you certainly stay along with me.

Cicely. Laud! Sir, do you think I won't come back
to you again?

Wild. Why, will you?

Cicely. For certain I will.

Wild. Nay, then, they may do as they please. But
you'll return soon.

Cicely. Don't be too impatient neither; my young
mistresses want a great deal of courting.

Wild. Egad, I think so; but make what haste you
can, child; the dew falls apace.

Cicely. Yonder is a dry hovel, Sir, where you may
wait till I come back. But don't ramble into the
yard, for fear of the mastiffs.

Wild. Well thought of, my dear. I shall lie close
till you return, my dear dairy-maid. So I don't wish
you good night. [Exit.

Cicely. And yet the poor gentleman might as well: for
the nights are so short, I shall hardly prevail to get him

in

in doors till morning. But it is moonlight, and there is plenty of pease-straw in the hovel.

CICELY.

The sky so clear, the night so fine,

The watch-dogs bay the moon?

Then lie close, London spark of mine,

For fear I come not soon.

Poor Cicely vows her heart it moves

To speak her mind so free—

Then lie close, thy dear dairy-maid,

Can come no more to thee.

[Exit.]

SCENE the Farmer's Hall.

Enter Sir John Manly and Sternold.

Stern. Well, Sir; as I find your character and intentions are honourable, I am satisfied. I have no other objection to make than the general one against unequal and precipitate marriages. I could wish your affections had been of flower growth, to have taken deeper root. Beauty is like a rich but shallow soil. It is fertile; but I always suspect 'tis sudden shoots come up too hastily to be vigorous or lasting.

Sir John. Rather suspect the languid affection of the mercenary tribe, who marry only for money.

Stern. Well, Sir, if you are so fully determined, I have nothing farther to say; except that, if you mean to be married this morning, (for you have kept us up till past midnight) you must not have much sleep, I can tell you. You must ride some miles, and that expeditiously too, to procure a licence and get tacked together within canonical hours.

Sir John. Sleep, Sir! I promise you, I shall not go to bed till I return. You will be so obliging as to let my servant and one of yours, get the horses ready to

attend us: my lovely Flora has promised she would set out with me the moment I procured your permission,

Stern. Adventurous girl! Well, go see after your mistress, while I order the necessary preparations for your journey. Heav'n grant that your love prove as lasting as it seems to be sincere. Not but that a match made only for love is as likely to turn out happy as one made merely for money.

Sir John. Ay, never fear, farmer. [Exit Stern.

Sir John.

The passion doubt, when faintly gleams
From gold is borrow'd light:
The moon thus sheds her watery beams,
Still cold, however bright.

True love is like the sun, whose rays,
A genial warmth impart;
While beauty's warmer, brighter blaze

Inflames at once the heart,

[Exit,

SCENE a Farm-Yard.

Enter Wildman.

Wild. Fairly jilted, by Jupiter! Here have I been waiting, like an ass, the return of a skittish young filly, till it is broad day-light. By the noises that have continued all the while in the house, one would imagine this out-of-the-way old fellow kept his family up all night; or at least that, like a ship's crew, they, kept watch and watch about. If I am not revenged of the little devils for playing me this trick---Ha! here comes my arch little simpleton alone. An early riser, 'faith. She may chance to get a fall before night.

Enter

Enter Mrs. Townly.

Ha ! Miss. Have I caught you ? [Lays hold of her.

Mrs. Town. Sir, my uncle would speak with you.

Wild. Yes, child : and I would speak with you too.

What a pretty trick you country-cousins contrived to play me last night ! Do you think I shall tamely put up with it ?

Mrs. Town. Bless me, Sir ! Have you been in the orchard all night ? [Affecting astonishment.

Wild. No : but I have been skulking in yonder hovel, all night.

Mrs. Town. What with Cis, the dairy maid ; I'll warrant !

Wild. No : all alone, I warrant. But come, child, you shall go and satisfy yourself.

Mrs. Town. Laud, Sir ! What do you mean ?

Wild. Mean, my dear ! Nothing, but to let you see whether the bed be tumbled or not.

[Wildman endeavours to force Mrs. Townly off the stage.

Mrs. Town. Nay, then, help ! help ! Uncle ! murderer, help !

Enter Sternold with two servants ; who go up to Wildman and seize him ; while Mrs. Townly breaks from him and runs off.

Stern. So, so. There, there ; the game is safe. What, my honest guest, Mr. Wildman ! Is it you that have strolled out poaching abroad so early ? You are really a very modest gentleman. What can you say for yourself now ? Ha !

Wild. Say ! Why I say that your kinswoman here has been very uncivil to me.

Stern. And you would have been as much too civil to her ! Hah ! Is it not so ? Come, come, bring him along. He shall have a ducking and a fair race for it. Our horse-

horse-pond, Sir, is something wide and not of the clearest. If you can swim across it, I believe you will not make a hunting seat of my farm again in haste.

Wild. Sir, I am a gentleman, and expect to be used accordingly. Take off your two ruffians and let me speak with you alone.

Stern. Well, Sir. I'll trust you. I'll give you more credit than you deserve. Do you hear? [To the servants.] Stay, without, that you may be ready within call. [Exeunt servants.]

Now, Sir, what have you to say in arrest of judgment?

Wild. Sir, I say, that I have done nothing contrary to law.

Stern. Not contrary to law?

Wild. Not to common law; which is founded solely on custom: and it has been the custom, time out of mind, for us young fellows, whose blood flows briskly through our veins, to use no ceremony with a wholesome cherry-cheek'd country wench, wherever we have the opportunity of a barn, bed, hovel, or haycock.

Stern. Mighty well! And so you confess you would have overpowered her, hah!

Wild. A little agreeable violence is absolutely necessary on these occasions. It saves a world of altercation and gives an edge to appetite.

Stern. And so having finished this agreeable affair; that is having dishonoured yourself by doing the poor girl an irreparable injury, you could have reconciled your behaviour to your principles, and have sat down perfectly satisfied with the probity of the action?

Wild. Faith, I believe I should.

Stern. What can provoke you to such injustice and barbarity?

Wild. Health and high spirits, my dear misanthrope. Look you, old Wormwood, I have entered into a covenant

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 41

nant with youth to make the most of time. I have seized fast hold of his forelock, and won't let him give me the slip for a moment without some enjoyment.

WILDMAN.

Give me then life's largest cup ;
Fill with pleasure, fill it up ;
Pleasure, such as love inspires,
Melting joys and warm desires ;
Keep, Oh ! keep it running o'er,
Till, grown old, I thirst no more.

Stern. Hoity ! Toity ! What a dissolute wretch have we got here !

Wild. Come, come, old boy, don't mistake your ill-nature for virtue, or your crusty humour for an antipathy to vice. Every cynic is not a philosopher. Pr'y-thee polish yourself, therefore, my dear rough diamond. You are the sourest old fellow, I think, I ever met with. You invite a man into your house here, and then deny him the only tid-bit he has a mind to.

Stern. You know the conditions, Sir, on which you entered this house. But you have broken through every social obligation, and yet imagine you are still acting in the character of a gentleman.

Wild. Well said, father grey-beard ! Egad I fancy you would make a good methodist preacher. But, as we are not likely to agree in our principles, with exchange of compliments on both sides, let us take leave.

Stern. Stay, Sir. I must first have satisfaction for the insult put on my family.

Wild. Oh ! with all my heart, old plough-share. I understand you was born a gentleman. So your time, place and weapons in a few words.

Stern. Not mine, I assure you. I have lived long enough to be a little wiser. But the young woman you have insulted, has a lover ; who lives in the neighbour-

42 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

bourhood, and has spirit enough to give you the meeting.

Wild. Gadso ! Your bullies about you too ! I did not suspect that. However I'll meet him, Sir.

Stern. Expect him then, under the elms, in the meadow behind the farm, precisely at noon. And alone Sir.

Wild. I will not fail, Sir.

Stern. You dare not, for fear of being posted for a coward ; a greater reproach to a modern fine gentleman than that of being stigmatized as a villain, or even a murderer.

Wild. You are right, old gentleman, there is nothing a man of spirit is so much afraid of, as that of being thought afraid of any thing.

YOUNG WILDMAN, and STERNOLD, alternately.

Right or wrong, true or false, good or bad be your cause,

Proud honour with nature at strife,
O'er justice to triumph and laugh at the laws,
You have only to venture your life.

'Tis the mode, and the world will be still so polite,
Whatever the cause be of strife.

To think, though you're wrong, that you're still
in the right,

If but boldly you venture your life.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE a Meadow, near the Farm-House.

Enter Wildman.

Wild. A fine time of day for a cool thrust, just in the heat of the sun. Egad I have no appetite for it. I wish it was over. But where's my rival ! I am before my time, I see. [Looking at his watch.] Ha ! *Manly.*

Enter Sir John Manly.

Manly. George, what are you doing here ?

Wild. Doing. I have been looking about the fields for you. Where the deuce have you been all this morning, that I could not get a sight of you ?

Manly. With my charming Flora, to be sure. Where should I have been ?

Wild. Well, and you have brought her to reason at last, have you ?

Manly. I hope so.

Wild. Ay, ay. I told you the way—Marry her, indeed ! A fine scheme !

Manly. True that's all over. I may go to bed to her now if I will, without asking leave of the parson.

Wild. If you will ! And won't you ? What the devil, have you more scruples than the girl ?

Manly. Why, faith, she is so innocent and credulous that I cannot bear the thoughts of imposing on her simplicity.

Wild. Well then, marry her afterwards, if you like it. But I may safely trust you for that; you are too

44 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

good a friend to population to encourage the inclosure of commons.

Manly. This spot, however, is neither common nor waste, George ; and a little legal inclosure is a convenience to life, when the land has been carefully cultivated.

Wild. Yes, yes, it has been cultivated. I'll warrant it---But you cannot intend to marry the wench.

Manly. Indeed, I did intend it in the morning.

Wild. What, to take the refuse of a clod-hopper to your bed, and share her favours perhaps with a plowman?

Manly. Nay, no more of this, her virtues are equal to her beauty.

MANLY.

Though meaner far my *Flora*'s lot,

And I of princely line ;
I'd take her from her humble cot,
Or make that cottage mine.

From chance derived, let noble birth,

Ideal honours claim ;
In virtue there is real worth ;
A title's but a name.

Wild. Virtue! Ha, ha, ha. Yes, yes, it is a very virtuous family we have stumbled on here indeed. I suppose I am to be bullied into marrying the niece too, but----

Manly. Hold, Sir, I have hitherto borne your reflections with temper, but I must not indulge you farther.

Wild. Oh, Oh ! You are serious ! Are you ? Well come, come, did it want a wife ? It shall have a Dutch

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 45

Dutch ginger bread one, gilt with Dutch gold too ;
not worth a stiver.

Manly. Pr'ythee, George, don't make me angry
with you in earnest.

Wild. Why, what's the matter with you, man ?
Are you mad in earnest ? You are as fractious as if
you were married already and had found your wife as
wise as yourself.

Manly. To confess the truth then I am married.

Wild. Married ! How ? When ? Where ? To
whom ?

Manly. This morning, to Flora. And now you
know my situation. Tell me, as a friend, your opi-
nion of what I have done.

Wild. Done ! Pox, you have done a very silly
thing ; tied yourself to a waxen baby, a mere mop-
pet, a prating, party-coloured paroquet, which you
will play with like a child, till you are tired ; and
then, in a peevish fit, be ready to wring its neck off.

WILDMAN.

The whining girl or whimpering boy,

Papa's or mother's darling,

Obtaining thus a favourite toy,

By sulking or by snarling ;

A while he in it takes a pride,

So pleasing is the gay thing !

But soon, the bauble thrown aside,

He cries for some new play-thing.

Manly. Nay, if that be all, farewell. I see you
are bent on railing at every thing. But, if you will
come and dine with us at Sir Wilful's you may pos-
sibly be converted.

Wild.

46 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Wild. At my uncle's !

Manly. Yes, the Baronet intercepted us, in our return from church, and insisted on the celebration of our marriage at the manor house. You'll give us your company, George. [Exit.

Wild. Not I. You have ruined our project there-- Besides I have other business.---My antagonist is not very alert in keeping the farmer's appointment. Perhaps this is he coming cross the field.---No, this is a mere boy.---I suppose my hero has sent some formal excuse; the women have locked him up; the country is raised: or the justices have issued their warrant to stop hostile proceedings and make up the matter over a friendly bottle.

Enter *Mrs. Townly*, in man's cloaths.

Mrs. Townly. Your servant, Sir.

Wild. Yours, Sir. [Aside.] Some young ensign of the militia, I suppose.

Mrs. Townly. I am sent hither, Sir, to do justice to an injured fair, whom I have the honour to be well with, and I suppose you are my man.

Wild. And do you think yourself man enough, young gentleman, to support your pretensions to her.

Mrs. Townly. Oh, Sir. I have brought a stouter man than you on his knees before now.

Wild. But what interest may you have in the wench to engage you thus in her affairs ?

Mrs. Townly. Oh, Sir ! I have been her favourite a good while; her chief fault indeed is being a little too fond of me.

MRS.

MRS. TOWNLY.

I freely confess, Sir,
I dress and undress her ;
Alone with her quite at my ease.
No mortal but I, Sir,
Her constant adviser,
Can do with her just as I please.

'Tis not so gallant, to be sure, to mention particulars of this nature, but the affair is no secret. I think this is the seventh challenge I have given or received, for her and her cousin, Flora. The seventh ! No, the eighth. Four justices, two excisemen, a parson, and yourself.

Wild. Flora ! What you have had her too, hah ?

Mrs. Townly. Excuse me there, Sir, she's married, it seems---Faith, I'm very glad on't---Poor man ! Your friend, I mean. I hope he is not apt to be jealous---If his son and heir should step into the world before the usual time, he would do well to impute it rather to the forwardness of the boy, than to the frailty of his wife.

Wild. Thou art the most impudent braggard, I ever met with.

Mrs. Townly. 'Tis false, Sir. What because I have reprieved you a little and suffered you to breathe a moment, while I diverted you with my gallantries, you grow insolent.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha, thou art a very pot-gun charged with air.

Mrs. Townly. And thou, a wooden blunderbuss without any charge at all.

Wild. Thou most insignificant animal !

[*Wildman draws and advances towards Mrs. Townly.*

WILD-

WILDMAN.

Come, come, draw your sword, Sir,
Without more delay,

Mrs. TOWNLY.

Not I, on my word, Sir,
I fight my own way.

[Presenting a large pistol, on which Wildman starts and
instantly retires.]

Nay, think not to fly,
Put up, or you drop,
With a flash and a pop,
Put instantly up, or you die.

Wild. Hah ! What have you these tricks, my little
bully ?

Mrs. Townly. As you make a longer lunge than I,
Sir, it may not be prudent to engage with you at
small sword. But put up and take this, or this [Pre-
senting two pistols. Wildman puts up his sword and takes
one.] You may change it or recharge it, if you suspect
my honour.

Wild. How is it loaded ?

Mrs. Townly. With a brace of bullets, Sir.

Enter Farmer Sternold.

Stern. [To Mrs. Townly.] Aha ! What engaged
already, my little friend ! [To Wildman.] I told you
he was a lad of spirit, and would find you sport.
Keep your ground, for he shoots flying to a miracle.

Wild. Does he ? Egad, then I am glad you are come,
farmer, for we were just going to be very serious
here. This little huff-bluff Hector will let nobody
kiss your family but himself, it seems. Pr'ythee, let
us make up this affair, old gentleman. I own I
don't fancy this flash and a pop, as your young friend
calls it---If I am in the wrong; why---

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 49

Stern. Oh, Sir. Nothing will satisfy him now, but your blood; depend on it.

Mrs. Townly. [Traversing the stage with her pistol cock'd.] No, Sir. Nothing but your blood! Nothing but your blood! Demme.

Wild. Well, Sir, if nothing else will do----

Mrs. Townly. Come on---Let us retreat each five paces, then turn round on our heels, and give fire together. [They meet, retire each five paces and then turn round. Wildman fires, and Mrs. Townly falls, as if shot.]

Stern. Oh, he is shot! he is killed! my poor boy is murdered!

Wild. What have I done! Curse on my steady hand.

Stern. Help, help, murder! Help.

Wild. Nay then it is time to provide for my own safety. [Exit.

Enter several Country Fellows.

All. What's the matter! What's the matter?

1st Coun. Codso! here's murderation committed, I believe.

Stern. Run, fly, pursue the murderer, all of you. Yonder he scampers. I'll see to the young gentleman. [Exit countrymen.

Mrs. Townly. [cautiously rising.] Is the coast clear?

Stern. All off. Admirably performed, indeed. I was afraid you durst not have stood fire.

Mrs. Townly. Yes, yes, as I know there was no danger I was not much afraid. Bring him up to the

50 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

manor house when taken—I'll slip across the fields and be there before you. [Excuse severally.]

SCENE an Apartment in the Manor-house.

Enter Sir Wilful Wildman and Sir John Manly.

Manly. Really, Sir Wilful, you give yourself too much trouble, I am obliged to you, but could wish to be excused.

Sir Wil. Excused! No, no. No excuse; I will have no excuse. What a bridegroom and afraid of a fiddle! A tenant's daughter married and not have a dance!

Manly. Well, Sir, if it must be so—

Sir Wil. And so it is that graceless young rogue, my nephew, you have brought with you into the country, eh?

Manly. Yes, Sir Wilful; and I could wish I might be the means of restoring him to your favour.

Sir Wil. Restore him, Sir!—He never lost my favour. He never had it. He forfeited all pretensions to that before he was born.

Manly. How, Sir! Before he was born!

Sir Wil. My brother, you must know, mortally offended me by his extravagance; so that, though I consented to be the boy's guardian, for the sake of his mother, I shall never be reconciled to him on the account of his father.

Manly. That resolve does not square with your reported generosity, Sir Wilful. The son may not inherit the foibles of his father.

Sir

Sir Wil. Yes, yes, prodigality runs in the blood as well as other fashionable disorders ; he has made away with his whole patrimony already, and might starve but for the annuity, I allow him out of regard to the honour of our family.

Manly. Young men, Sir Wilful, are apt to be too liberal. By keeping good company he has fallen into bad hands.

Sir Wil. Why give the rogue his due, he has kept good company, as you say. Who but George Wildman at Boodle's, the thatched house, the St. James's, and, and----every where else, egad, where he might spend, or lose his money. To be sure, he is the worse for good company. And yet, if the young rascal had my estate to-morrow, he'd run headlong into better, and ruin himself for ever.

Manly. It is unhappily too true, Sir. The first men in the kingdom are liable to be stript by sharpers.

Sir Wil. Yes, but George is not sharp enough to strip me. He would be the first man in the kingdom, I know, to do it, but I shall be the last man to let him. No, no, let him play at sharps with those that have taught him the game,

SIR WILFUL WILDMAN.

The youth of the age are so prodigal grown,
So profligate, thoughtless and idle ;
That all my estate should I lend him on loan,
At Newmarket races,
At Bath and such places,
My money and lands would go after his own :
No, no, let him bite on the bridle.

Our *family mansion*, which *Time* still regards,
 In mould'ring would totter and fidle ;
 Our *oaks*, that once shelter'd old *Druids* and *Bards*,
 At *Almack's* and *Arthur's*,
 Amongst stars and garters,
 To earth would be fell'd by a cut of the cards ;
 No, no, let him bite on the bridle.

Manly. But, Sir Wilful---

Sir Wil. No entreating, Sir John. It is only waste of breath. It will be to no purpose. Here has been a pretty lady from London, this month past interceding for him. If she can do any thing with him, well and good ; otherwise I am inexorable. Not but that he shall have all when I die ; I'll not give sixpence out of the family--But not a farthing more than his allowance while I live. But I shall survive the rogue ; he'll certainly come to be hanged. I have heard such things of him ! he'll certainly come to be hanged.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The coach is returned, Sir, with the ladies.

Sir Wil. Gadso, ay, shew them up.

Manly. Ladies ! Sir Wilful.

Sir Wil. Only a neighbour or two, just to make up a party for a country dance after dinner. [Sir Wilful goes to the door, to introduce the Ladies.

Manl. [Aside.] This queer old Baronet is so troublesome with his civility, I find I must go through the impertinence of a public wedding after all.

Enter

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 53

Enter *Lady Lucy*, elegantly dressed.

Sir Wil. [Leading *Lady Lucy* forward.] Sir John Manly.

Manly. So ! I must salute them too, it seems. [He goes to salute *Lady Lucy*, and starts back.] My love ! my dear ! Is it you ? Why this change of dress ? Wherefore thus metamorphosed ?

Lady Lucy. I hope my features are not alter'd with my clothes.

Manly. No, my love ; but you can receive no addition by dress that will not injure the simplicity of your charms.

MANLY.

Can shreds of fattin, silk or lace

By mode or taste combin'd,

Bestow one beauty in the face,

One virtue on the mind ?

Then, *Flora*, wherefore stoop so low

To have recourse to art ?

Your charms require not dress nor shew,

To captivate the heart.

Sir Wil. All this is very true, Sir John. But here-by hangs a tale. It was formerly an odd custom for the Lord of this Manor---

Manly. Why are not you he ?

Sir Wil. Not I, Sir : no, no. The present Lord is a relation of mine by marriage. I thought you had known him ; but you'll know him presently.

Manly.

54 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

Manly. Well, Sir; and what of him?

Sir Wil. Being a humorist and a man of pleasure, he lately took it into his head to revive the obsolete custom, I was going to tell you of; by promising a handsome marriage portion to a tenant's daughter, on condition of her indulging him in the privilege of a husband on her wedding-night.

Man. And she has found a man, I suppose, that will marry her on such conditions!

Sir Wil. Our peasantry, Sir John, are few of them so nice as to let honour stand in the way of profit.

Manly. But what is all this to us, Sir?

Sir Wil. True, Sir John, that is as you take it; but the point is, your spouse is the damsel, on whom my kinsman has promised to bestow his bounty, and as he is ready to fulfil his part of the agreement, he thinks he has a right to insist on the performance of covenants on the part of the bride.

Manly. Ha! ha! ha! I see you are disposed to be merry with me, Sir Wilful.

Sir Wil. Gadso, but I am very serious, Sir John. The maiden, never dreaming it would be her lot to meet with a husband, who should object to the condition of the obligation, thought there was no harm in thus providing herself with something to begin the world with. But, if you refuse your consent, to be sure, the landlord must forego his claim.

Manly. Consent! Confound his claim and his covenant too! I'll shoot him through the head, for having the insolence to mention it.

Lady Lucy. And me through the heart at the same time, Sir?

Manly. Madam! Lady

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

58

Lady Lucy. Since all must come out, Sir, it is in vain to deny that I love this landlord.

Manly. Love him ! Sir Wilful's kinsman ! the lord of the manor !

Lady Lucy. The same, Sir.

LADY LUCY.

Let lord and husband have his due ;

I yield to each his part ;

For when I gave my hand to you,

I gave to him my heart.

While your commands I, then, obey,

And prove a loving wife ;

O'er him, Oh ! let me bear the sway,

A mistress, lov'd for life.

Manly. Mighty loving, indeed ! I thank you for your love, Madam.—But what can you see in me so absurd as to attempt thus to impose upon me ?

Lady Lucy. Take care you don't impose on yourself, Sir.

Manly. 'Sdeath, Madam ! who is this landlord ?—Let me see him. What's his name ? Where is he ?

Lady Lucy. If you can command your passion, Sir, you may find yourself alone with him in the adjoining gallery, and be satisfied of his claim.

Manly. Yes, yes, Madam, he shall give me satisfaction, depend on it. [Exit.]

Sir Wil. 'Egad, his blood circulates purely. What a confounded flurry he is in !

Lady Lucy. I begin to pity him, Sir ; he suffers too much from an imaginary evil. Let us follow him.

[Exit.]

SCENE,

SCENE, Another Apartment in the Manor-house.

Enter Sir John Manly in great agitation.

Manly. Confusion ! What can I make of all this ?
 [Looking anxiously about.] I see nobody.

Enter Mrs. Townly, in man's cloaths.

Manly. Ah, ha ! here he comes. [Aside.]

Mrs. Town. [Aside.] So far, so good. Now, if I can but steal undiscovered to her dressing-room —

[Walks on tip-toe across the stage.]

Manly. [Coming forward and stopping her.] Yes, Sir ; but you don't steal undiscovered to her dressing-room, I assure you, 'Sdeath, Sir ! how dare you have the impudence to think a gentleman would suffer such an insult ? Draw this moment, or — [Drawing his sword.]

Mrs. Town. Bless me, Sir ! What's the matter ?

Manly. You know very well what's the matter, Sir.

Mrs. Town. The deuce take me, if I do.

Manly. Come, come, draw, my little rampant lord land'ord.

Mrs. Town. Landlord : The deuce a landlord am I, Sir. Not a mansion, hovel, or tenement have I in the whole county — Nay, Sir, I am only tenant at will to the cloaths on my back.

Manly. It is in vain to trifl. You were sneaking to her dressing-room. Draw, I say.

Mrs. Town. Not I, Sir, without some better reason.

Manly. Dost thou talk of reason too, thou contemptible little animal ?

Mrs. Town. Yes, faith, do I. And I think it very hard, for a man who has just fallen in one duel, to be taken up so soon by a second.

Manly. Do you laugh at me, Sir ?

[Advancing.]

Mrs.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 57

Mrs. Town. Hold, hold, Sir! I tell you I have been shot once to-day already. You would not go to kill me again.

Manly. Insolent trifler!—Defend yourself this moment, or, by heavens—

[*Puts himself in a posture of defence.*

Mrs. Town. Nay, then, it is well I secured my fire-arms.

[*Afide.*

MRS. TOWNLY.

The man is stark mad without doubt!

And this for my safety expedient—

[*Presents a pistol to Manly, who retires.*

To the right, if you please—Wheel about—

'Tis well, Sir—So—There—Your obedient.

[*Crosses the stage, and exit.*

Manet *Manly, with his sword drawn, in great confusion.*

Sir Wilful and Lady Lucy *enter at folding doors that open in the centre of the scene.*

Sir Wil. Ha! ha! ha! What, fencing with the air, man? Fighting with your own shadow?

Manly. It is well, Sir, that your age and house protect you. As for you, Madam, I have learned to despise you, since I have seen the thing on which you had placed your affections.

Lady Lucy. What thing, Sir?

Manly. That toy of silk and tinsel, that went out just now. Bullies should be made of more substantial stuff. But, thank Heaven, our marriage is not consummated, nor ever shall. I'll sue out a divorce, or ride post to Japan, but I'll get rid of this affair.

Sir Wil. [to *Lady Lucy.*] Codso! We shall carry this joke too far here: the man's brain is turned in good earnest.—[*To Manly.*] Why, Sir John, there was nobody here but in your own imagination.

Manly. Away ! thou egregious old coxcomb.

[Putting up his sword and going.]

LADY LUCY.

Oh, stay ! Ah, turn, my only dear !

The sportive trial's too severe ;

It pains me thus to grieve you.

Leave not in rage your faithful bride,

But lay your fears and frowns aside,

And let her undeceive you.

Manly. 'Sdeath, Madam ! What do you mean ?

Lady Lucy. I mean, Sir, that you yourself are the favourite landlord in question. It is you who gave me the promise of your whole fortune for my wedding-portion.—It is you to whom I have given both my hand and heart.

Sir Wil. It is even so, Sir John. This is my niece Lucy, late Lady of the Manor ; and you my new kinsman, who have entered, it seems, into a matrimonial contract to go to bed together. You see you have stumbled on a fortune without knowing it.

Lady Lucy. Yes, Sir ; and I now give you my portion in possession, in return for yours in promise.—This morning I was mistress of this mansion, with all the pastures and plowed fields within two miles round. At present they are yours : you are their owner now, lord of this manor and me.

Manly. Is it possible ?

Sir Wil. Oh, yes, it is very possible that things should be as they are. Well, Sir John, what say you now ? Shall the marriage be consummated or not ? Shall the landlord have his due ? or will you shoot him through the head ? Sue out a divorce, or ride post to Japan, to get rid of this affair ? Hah ?

Manly. I am dumb with admiration.

Lady

Lady Lucy. I was resolved, Sir, never to venture on a husband, till I was convinced that my person, rather than my fortune, was his aim.—That proof you have generously given me; and I am rejoiced that I can make you this grateful return.—You must impute the artifices, I have used in procuring this assurance, to the design concerted between you and your friend, for the disposal of both my person and fortune without my consent.

Manly. I own it; with blushes I own it. How shall I repay thy generosity?—Give me thy hand, thy lips, thy heart; there let me dwell, and be for ever happy. [Embraces her.]

Sir Wil. There, there; so, so. All's compos'd again. Egad, I was afraid you were non compos, when you talked of meeting a bully here.

Manly. By heavens, I encountered an insolent boy, who with fire arms set me at defiance and retired.

Lady Lucy. Mrs. Townly, as I live, returning from her expedition against Mr. Wildman; who is in consequence, you see, taken into custody. You must join with us in inflicting a little imaginary punishment too on your friend.

Enter Wildman, guarded by a Constable and other country fellows: with Farmer Sternold, who goes up to Lady Lucy and converses with her aside.

Const. [To Sir Wilful.] An please your worship, we have apprehended a vagrom here, who has committed a murder, as I may say, in Farmer Sternold's close. And so we have brought him to take his examination afore your worship, and be committed to gaol.

Sir Wil. Murder! say you? Whom has he murdered?

Const. Nea, nea, I did na see the dead mon, to be sure, to ask'un. But the fellow and he, beliken, had

60 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

some words about their sweethearts, and so he shot'un that's aw.

Sir John. [To *Wildman*.] I always told you, George, what these wild doings would bring you to; but you would still run riot upon every thing. What could you expect?

Wild. Yes, faith, we have made a very fine expedition of it. One of us is married to a jilt, and the other will be hanged for killing her bully.

Sir Wil. A fair confession. Where's John, clerk? Here, let him make out the fellow's mittimus. I'll dispatch him to the county jail, in an instant.

Wild. To the county jail! Sir John, you will be bound for my appearance at the assizes.

Manly. As to that, George, I must beg to be excused. I am sorry for you, but a murder is serious affair, and the law must take its course.

Sir Wil. Ay, certainly—Where's John, clerk? The vagrant stands committed.

Wild. Then, Sir, for the sake of your family, I must be so free as to acquaint you who I am. Look at me, Sir, are my features unknown to you?

Sir Wil. Gadso! Where's my spectacles? Let me see---Ay, sure enongh, the very fellow that I committed to Lincoln jail for horse-stealing! Egad, friend, if yours be a family phiz, it is a very unpromising one, I can assure you.

Wild. And yet, Sir, I am your nephew, George *Wildman*.

Wil. My nephew! you George *Wildman*!

Man. Tis too true, Sir *Wilful*, and I cannot help reflecting on the sagacity of your late prediction. The young gentleman will certainly come to be hanged, as you said.

Sir Wil. True, but I did not think I should have the trouble of signing his mittimus.

Stern. With your worship's leave; as the culprit

proves

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

61

proves to be a kinsman of yours, and I am the only witness that can convict him ; if he should chuse to supply the place of the poor girl's sweetheart he has killed, and marry her, my evidence, you know, on that condition—

Wild. No, thou rascally old pandar.

Sir Wil. Nay, no abuse, friend ; you have your choice. It is a fair offer ; the girl or the gallows.

Sir WILFUL.

Does the foolish fellow faulter ?
Pr'ythee make no more delay ;
Take the wench or take the halter,
Stand not shill-I, shall-I, pray.

Sternold. [To Wildman.]
While there's life, man, there is hope,
Take the wife and leave the rope.

Lady Lucy. [To Manly.]
Sarce can I refrain from laughter.

Manly. [To Sternhold.]
Mayn't the man be hang'd hereafter,
When to wife and husband too—

Sternold.

The rope may prove a friend—

Sir Wilful.

That's true.

Enter Mrs. Townly, in man's cloathes.

Mrs. Townly. Hey day ! What's the matter here !

[All appear surpriz'd.

Wild. Ha ! my little bully alive.

Mrs. Townly. My antagonist in custody ! I expected as much. You may release him, gentlemen, as I am unhurt. My foot only slipped, and my friend, the farmer, here, took the alarm before I could recover myself.

Wild.

Wild. Let me embrace you, my little bravo.

[Runs to embrace Mrs. Townly, who retires.

Mrs. Town. Nay no more rudeness, Sir, at your peril. My Uncle Sternold is here to protect me. Don't you know his niece. Laura, Sir?

Wild. How! Laura!

Sir Wil. [After conferring with *Lady Lucy*, aside.] Very frolicksome truly all this! A pretty piece of work, you young folks have made of it here. But come, come, it is my turn to have a frolick now. Look you here Mr. Scapegrace, I dare say, tho' *Mrs. Laura* did not chuse to be a mistress, she will have no objections to be made a wife.

Mrs. Townly. Sir Wilful.

Sir Wil. Silence, hussy.

Mrs. Townly. But, Sir Wilful!

Wild. How, Sir! a farmer's daughter!

Sir Wil. Ay, firrah, or you shall inherit no farm lands of mine. A farmer's daughter, booby! Why every woman is somebody's daughter. But you're out, you rogue, this is *Mrs. Townly*, Sir, a London lady of family and fortune.

Wild. Mrs. Townly! Nay then I am caught in a snare, I thought I had escaped. Folly, I see, makes one as blind as love; I should else have sooner recollected those features I have so often admired. May I hope, Madam— [To *Mrs. Townly*]

Mrs. Townly. Nay don't talk to me about your hopes, I know nothing of the matter. Sir Wilful seems to dispose of us all as his property; but—

Sir Wil. But what, hussy? Come take her hand, boy, take her hand. If you can venture for once on a wife, I warrant she'll venture twice on a husband.

[*Wildman takes Mrs. Townly's hand and eagerly kisses.*

Mrs. Townly. Hold, hold, Sir; no more. Sir Wilful seems positive, but—

Sir Wil. Again! at your buts?

Lady

THE LADY OF THE MANOR. 63

Lady Lucy. Nay, cousin, pay some regard, for my sake, to the hasty example before you.

Sir Wil. Which if they don't follow, adod, I'll make such an example of them—

Manly. Never fear, Sir Wilful. I'll be bound for my friend's appearance at the assizes now. At the same time, take notice, George, that however you, libertines, may affect to turn matrimony into ridicule, there is no lasting bliss but in honourable love.

Sir Wil. Right, Sir John: And here I see are our neighbours and tenants assembled to wish you joy on the occasion. Let them all come in—you must know it is our sheepshearing time, and we must make a general holiday of it.

MANLY.

False and flattering is the kiss
Of the fickle faithless *miss*.

LUCY.

True and faithfully for life,
Loves a chaste endearing *wife*.

Mrs. TOWNLY.

Marriage might indeed have joys,
Youth so true to beauty.

WILDMAN.

Laughing girls and blooming boys,
Blessing love and duty.

STERNOLD.

Joy, then, to the wedded pair!
Joy unmix'd with *sorrow*!

SIR WILFUL.

Hold you there—an hour of *care*
Must bid an heir good-morrow.

CHORUS.

64 THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

C H O R U S.

Joy, then, to the wedded pair!

Joy, unmix'd with sorrow!

Till the birth-day hour of care,

Bid girl or boy good-morrow.

THE END.



